

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 00226 142037Z
ACTION ARA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EB-03 TRSE-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00
INR-05 CIAE-00 SP-02 EUR-08 /044 W
-----150344Z 047484 /66

R 141946Z JAN 77
FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3727
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NASSAU
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0226

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN, PFOR, JM, US
SUBJECT: BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE (FCO) BOWLANDS MEETING WITH PM
MANLEY

1. BRITISH FCO MINISTER OF STATE ROWLANDS BRIEFLY VISITED
JAMAICA LAST WEEK IN COURSE OF CARIBBEAN TOUR. HE MET WITH
PM MANLEY FOR FORTY MINUTES ON JAN 7.

2. ACCORDING TO BRITISH DEPUTY BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER
GODDEN (WHO DEBRIEFED DCM ON JAN 14) MOST OF MEETING
GIVEN OVER TO SOCIAL CHITCHAT AND SUBSTANTIVE TOPICS COVERED
ONLY BRIEFLY IN VERY GENERAL TERMS. MANLEY DID PROVIDE TO
ROWLANDS CANDID OUTLINE JAMAICA'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. IN THAT CON-
NECTION MANLEY STATED GOJ PROBABLY COULD NOT GO THE "IMF
ROUTE" AS IMF CONDITIONS WERE "SEEMINGLY UNACCEPTABLE".
CONSEQUENTLY JAMAICA WOULD HAVE TO SOLVE ITS PROBLEMS
ITSELF THROUGH SEVERE AUSTERITY MEASURES, ALTHOUGH
THERE WAS SOME HOPE OF A "POLITICAL LOAN". MANLEY DID
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NOT NAME THE SOURCE OF THE "POLITICAL LOAN" OR OFFER
OTHER DETEAILS. MANLEY ALSO ALLUDED WITHOUT SPECIFICS
TO ALLEGED DESTABILIZATION EFFORTS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF
THE CARIBBEAN BY OUTSIDE FORCES DURING THE PAST YEAR.
HE ALSO DISPLAYED SOME OPTIMISM ABOUT IMPROVED RELATION-
SHIPS WITH THE U.S. FOLLOWING THE INAUGURATION OF THE
CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

3. COMMENT: GODDEN SAID THAT ROWLANDS AND BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER DRINKALL (WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE MEETING WITH MANLEY) WERE LEFT WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT MANLEY HAD NOT COMPLETELY CLOSED THE DOOR TO THE POSSIBILITIES OF IMF ASSISTANCE OVER THE LONGER TERM.

4. WHILE THE BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION HAS DRAWN NO FIRM CONCLUSIONS AS TO THE COURSE THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT HAS SET FOR JAMAICA, GODDEN SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THE MANLEY GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO SPEED UP THE PROCESSES OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN JAMAICA THROUGH AUSTERITY MEASURES WHICH WILL "FORCE THE PACE," E.G. BY LEVELING THE MIDDLE CLASSES "TO A MUCH LOWER COMMON DENOMINATOR", AND BY FORCING JAMAICANS TO PRODUCTIVITY AND COOPERATION AS A MEANS OF SURVIVAL. GODDEN IS PERSONALLY PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS AND ANTICIPATES THAT SERIOUS SOCIAL UNREST AND A DEGREE OF ANARCHY ARE MORE THAN LIKELY CONSEQUENCES. HE CITES AS AN INDICATOR OF SUCH A TREND THE RECENT SPATE OF "OCCUPATIONS" OF VACANT HOUSES AND LAND BY UNEMPLOYED JAMAICANS.

5. BRITISH HIGH COMMISSION IS SUFFICIENTLY CONVINCED AUSTERITY MEASURES WILL RESULT IN SPORADIC SERIOUS SHORTAGES OF FOOD STAPLES THAT IT IS ORDERING LARGE QUANTITIES OF SAME FOR ITS STAFF.

GERARD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, MINISTERIAL VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 14-Jan-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINGST00226
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770015-0797
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770152/aaaabszo.tel
Line Count: 89
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: c14671d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: LIMDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3598716
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRITISH MINISTER OF STATE (FCO) BOWLANDS MEETING WITH PM MANLEY
TAGS: EFIN, PFOR, JM, US, (ROWLANDS, TED)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/c14671d9-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009